

One Anothering To Overcome Opposition

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- [0 : 00] I'm going to butcher a name, but you can't see it anyway, so it's fine. So when Kam, a Kimu believer in Laos, planned a Thanksgiving celebration for the new year, community elders confronted him and gave him an ultimatum.
- They forbade him from worshiping the Christian God and demanded that he cancel the celebration. Later, the police and headmen of the village also forbade him from listening to Christian radio broadcasts and evangelizing at the risk of being ejected from the village and otherwise cut off from the community.
- Despite all this, Kam stands firm with God and continues to listen to the Bible and sermons on an MP3 player provided by Voice of the Martyrs, but his family is afraid because of the threats.
- The last time we were in Acts 4, we saw how Peter and John were arrested and interrogated by the Jewish leadership concerning the man who had been born lame but had been healed by Peter.
- As Peter answered, he gave glory to God. He claimed that the healing took place in the name of Jesus. It was nothing of himself that he did.
- [1 : 25] It was because of Jesus that this man was healed. And he claimed that there's no other name under heaven by which we must be saved except the name of Jesus.
- This type of boldness by Peter could not be tolerated. So the Jewish leaders commanded Peter and John not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.
- And they threatened them further when Peter and John said they could not but speak of what they had seen and heard. So the bottom line is the Sadducees were not going to bottle up and stop Peter and John from talking about Jesus and sharing about the things that they had seen and heard from him.
- Let's pick up in verse 23 of chapter 4. When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and elders had said to them.
- And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, why did the Gentiles rage and the people's plot in vain?
- [2 : 50] The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. For truly in this city they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.
- And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant, Jesus.
- And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Despite the opposition and threats, Peter and John were undeterred in their faith. Christianity in America has started to and will continue to become more and more the target of hostility and oppressive action, so long as faithful Christians continue to preach and live the truth of the word of God.

And much like our brother in Laos that I shared right at the beginning of the sermon, the day will come when we will risk being cut off from the community because of our commitment to Christ. That's the only thing.

[4 : 32] That was the only reason that he was being threatened to be cut off and ejected from the community is because of his commitment to Jesus. And there's nothing new under the sun.

That's happening in Laos. It will happen in America. It happens around the world in many different countries, many different places. And as we see in Acts 4, Peter and John provide for us a proper approach to these kinds of circumstances.

They faced it. Acts 4. 2,000 years ago. For 2,000 years, this type of activity has been taking place against Christians.

And so what did Peter and John do? What's their approach to dealing with it? Well, their approach is one-anothering to overcome opposition. It's the one-anothering to overcome opposition.

And I feel like I say this every week. I love how our Sunday school class and the word of God, as we go through the book of Acts, just overlap. What we're talking about, we talk about church growth, we talk about what's happening in the church that's preventing growth, what's happening outside the church that's preventing growth.

[5 : 48] This is one of the major, this was one of the big topics we were talking about this morning, was our growing in Christ and, you know, togetherness. And together serving, you know, serving one another and serving the community, growing in Christlikeness.

So it's amazing. I encourage you to come out. Adult Bible Study is, it's an awesome conversation and something that's worth thinking about. The church and its growth and such and how society views it.

But we'll come back to this approach, this one-anothering to overcome opposition that Peter and John give us. So we see in verse 23, the one-another there is that they share with one another.

They share with one another. In our society, there are people who believe that your spiritual or religious life is personal. And it's not anyone else's business. There are people in the church who believe that.

Well, it's my religion. It's my faith. If no one else needs to hear about it from me, I'm not going to shove it down their throat. And people in the world don't want you to shove it down their throat.

[7 : 00] They don't want to hear it from you. They don't want to hear one thing about Jesus or God or the Bible or sin or salvation. No, none of that. That's yours. That's your truth.

But that's not my truth. In fact, according to research reported by the Barna Group in 2018, in 1993, 89% of Christians who had shared their faith agreed that it is a responsibility of every Christian.

Today, just 64% of Christians say so. It's a 25-point drop. 64% of Christians today believe that it is the individual Christian's responsibility to share their faith.

In addressing the prevailing problem in our society, Roxanne Stone, who's the editor-in-chief at Barna, says this. So what's happening here? Why are Christians so reluctant to talk about their faith?

The overarching cultural trends of secularism, relativism, pluralism, and the digital age are contributing to a society that is less interested in religion and that has marginalized the place of spirituality in every life, which we talked about two weeks ago.

[8 : 18] As a result, Christians in America today have to live in the tension between Jesus' commands to tell others the good news and growing cultural taboos against proselytizing, a core part of Christianity from its origins, and many practicing Christians believe is essential for the salvation of their listeners.

So there's this tension, right? We understand from Scripture, we understand from the teachings of Jesus that He wants us to talk to others. He wants us to share the gospel.

He wants us to tell them the good news, to preach the kingdom of God, to tell the whole world that God is calling them to repentance. These are commands and expectations given to the believer.

And yet in the world we live in, in the society we live in, that's becoming more of a taboo thing. You don't do that. That's wrong. You don't proselytize. Everyone has their own faith and you leave it at that.

So there's that tension there. And we as believers and we as humans don't want to offend anybody. We don't want people upset with us.

[9 : 32] We don't want them mad at us. And we hear about it all the time in the media, the crazy world we live in. Who knows what's going to happen if we dare share our faith? It used to be just, well, what's the worst can happen?

People say no. Well, now, no. What's the worst that can happen? People get violent. They get upset. They destroy your property. They make your life a living hell.

That's what is happening because it's such a taboo thing to proselytize.

It's such a taboo thing to share your faith and encourage others to believe in Jesus. The reality, of course, is that your spiritual life is indeed very important business for all involved.

It's important for you to share as a Christ-minded individual who's obedient to the Great Commission. Matthew 28, 19. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[10 : 40] We are told to go and make disciples. So if we are a Christ-minded, obedient Christian, we are going to go and make disciples.

We are going to share our faith. We are going to make people uncomfortable. It's also important for you to share as one who contends for sound doctrine in the church.

Jude, verses 3 and 4. Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

For certain people have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were designated for this condemnation. Ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

One thing that we need to contend for is sound doctrine. We can't just let it go by the wayside.

[11 : 47] I get ridiculed and called out for this, and maybe I take steps too firmly in a direction that I need to. But the reality is we need to be teaching and preaching and standing on sound good doctrine and not allowing it to propagate, especially within the local assembly of believers.

It's also important for you to share as one who will suffer for doing good. I've mentioned this about three or four hundred times in the last year.

2 Timothy 3, verses 12 and 13. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Yeah, you want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, you will suffer, period. Paul wrote that 2,000 years ago.

Paul believed that then. And it still stands true today and every day from the time he penned it to now. You want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus.

[13 : 01] You want to honor God with your life in obedience. You will suffer for it. And notice, he doesn't give it, you know, you're going to suffer financial loss.

You're going to lose your life. You're going to go to prison. No, no. He says you're going to suffer. And for each person, that might look different. It might be a financial loss.

You might get fired from your job. You might have contention with your boss or uneasiness there. You might lose your home.

You don't know. You might be violently attacked. I don't know what your suffering is going to be. I don't know what that's going to look like.

All I know is the promise that is made. You want to live godly, you will be persecuted. I want to turn to 2 Peter chapter 3.

[14 : 02] Real quick, if you can turn there. I won't wait for you. I'll just start. If I ever get there myself. 2 Peter chapter 3 verses 13 through 17.

This isn't right. Must be 1 Peter 3. And if it's not, I'm just going to stop. Yep, it's 1 Peter.

I apologize. I was like, wait, this isn't right. 1 Peter 3 verse 13. Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed.

Have no fear of them, nor be troubled. But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy. Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

Yet do it with gentleness and respect. Having a good conscience so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

[15 : 17] For it is better to suffer for doing good if that should be God's will than for doing evil. There's a lot to unpack in this passage.

This is a whole other sermon, maybe even a mini sermon series that we could unpack here. But he's saying, who's there to harm you if you do what's good?

And even if you suffer for righteousness sake, it's better than suffering because you've done something foolish and stupid. Right? And it says that we are to honor Christ the Lord as holy.

That's the set apart Christ in your heart as holy. We talk about Jesus being the Lord of your life. You may have heard that statement before.

He's the one. He's the master. He's at the controls. He's the sovereign God to whom we answer and give an account to. And we seek him out in his word and we pray and we commit ourselves to him.

[16 : 18] That is what verse 15 is talking about. And so when people ask about the hope that is in you, what's this all about? You can tell them with gentleness and respect and love, hey, let me tell you about Jesus.

Jesus who loves you. Jesus who has a better plan than this world. He has an answer for the suffering and everything we're experiencing.

And we have a good conscience in the things we are saying and how we are acting and how we're talking to non-believers. So that when we are, if we are reviled for our good behavior, those people can be put to shame.

People will rise up and say, oh no, you got it all wrong about this guy. You got to be careful about our testimony. But you might suffer for righteousness sake and that's okay.

Of course, it's not important only for you. It's very important for the individual that you share it with. And I thought of Romans 10, 14. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

[17 : 22] And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? Well, how can someone believe if they've not heard the gospel message?

And let me tell you something. They're not breaking down the doors of the church to get in to hear it. And the pastor is only one guy. We need to be sharing in our faith and talking about Jesus with people.

How else are they going to hear? How can they believe? Is it guaranteed they're going to believe when you preach to them? Of course not. What broad is the way that leads to destruction?

Many there be that find it. But small is the gate, narrow is the way that leads to life. Few there be that find it. Right? So more people that you talk to about Jesus may scoff at you.

May make you feel awkward. May even threaten you. Don't ever talk to me about that. Don't tell me how to live my life. Whatever it is.

[18 : 39] More people. Higher percentage of people are going to reject it than accept it. But they can do neither if they don't hear it. So as can clearly be seen, sharing our faith is a high, ought to be a high priority in our lives as believers.

So we need to share our faith. But that's why it's of tremendous importance to Peter and John and why they could not but speak of what they had seen and heard. They couldn't hold it in. They spent three years with Jesus.

He died, was crucified, horrible death, all that stuff, buried. And guess what? Now he's alive. And we've seen him, you know, several times. And we see him go up into heaven. And we're kind of standing there before some people finally told us, hey, you better get going and do it.

He'll come back. Don't keep looking up. Don't keep looking for him. And that's the same with us. I get around Christians. Oh, man, Jesus is going to be coming back soon. Yeah, you might be right. Don't let him catch you sleeping.

What are you doing? The apostles in Acts 1 were told to go. Now, they were told at the end of Matthew 28, right? Go, make disciples of all nations. And Jesus ascends.

[19 : 47] And the angels that were there said, hey, guys, stop looking. Go and do now. Go and wait. You heard what he said. And he said that he would send the Holy Spirit. Guess what?

He did. Ten days later, Holy Spirit comes. Then they start proclaiming the mighty works of God. And from that point on, they can't stop. They can't hold it in. They're just bursting at the seams because of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and emboldening them.

Sorry, getting ahead of myself. That's the end of this chapter, too. The Jewish leaders told them to stop. They said, don't do it. They further threatened them.

I don't know what they threatened them with. There's no telling. Now, if you look at, if you went to chapter 5, middle of chapter 5, where they're arrested again, you see that they get flogged.

They get beaten. We're going to get to that in a few weeks. Well, a couple weeks anyway. You know, so it was probably a violent threat against them. But they still did it.

[20 : 49] And the fact is, when Peter and John faced opposition, they were having a hard time. They did exactly what we in the church must be doing. They one-anothered.

They shared with their companions, their friends. The purpose of the church is to do life with one another. It doesn't mean these are the only people you hang out with and talk to and associate with.

But it means we go through life together. We encourage each other. The Greek word for one another is *alalone*. And it appears a hundred times in the New Testament.

About 59 of those occurrences are specific commands teaching us how to relate to one another. When life starts to get hard or go sideways, let's take the opportunity to share with one another.

That may require some humility on your part to recognize your weakness and to talk to somebody about it. To text somebody. Hey, I'm having a hard time. Hey, things are going bad for me.

[21 : 58] Hey, I was in a car accident. I hit a tree sideways. You know, those types of things. Sorry, Tristan. Those types of things. You know, it's doing life together. It's, oh man, you know, are you okay?

What can I do for you? How can we pray for you? What do you need? We're doing life together. We know people who are to be living like Jesus.

Let's give them the opportunity to live like Jesus and to build one another up in the body. In the end, when we've shared with one another, it provides an opportunity to pray with one another.

Acts 4, 24 through 30. Prayer is a spiritual discipline that is abundantly exemplified by Jesus, the apostles, and many throughout church history as being of great importance.

Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, Matthew 26, verse 36. Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, sit here while I go over there and pray.

[23 : 04] Mind you, he's about to be betrayed and killed. And what's of importance to him? Prayer. Verse 41. Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He told his disciples, pray. Verse 42. Again, for the second time he went away and prayed. My father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.

Verse 44. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Prayer was of great importance to Jesus.

This is one instance in the Gospels where it says he went off to pray. And you see other times as well. He went off to pray before he chose the 12. He goes off to pray early in the morning.

He's praying late at night. It seems like he's praying all the time. He's praying for food. He prays for food. It multiplies. He prays for food. He prays for food. He prays for food. He prays and raises somebody from the dead.

[24 : 09] But prayer is of tremendous importance to the Son of God. If it is tremendous importance to the Son of God, our Savior, whom we are to be conformed into his image, then we ought to see it as being very important to us.

And we see the apostles in Acts 1 and 2 meeting together and praying. Chapter 1, verse 14. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer together with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and his brothers.

Everybody was there. Men, women, relatives, friends, strangers, praying together. Acts 2, verse 42. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

We talked about this a few weeks ago. They were devoting themselves to the times of prayer for the temple. That's where they were going. That was their meeting spot. Every day they were going and they were committed to prayer together.

So Jesus, the apostles, and then the emphasis of prayer in the preaching and writings of great men of the faith. I'm telling you, I had a hundred at least quotes come up in my search for prayer.

[25 : 22] And I was like, we're going to pick a couple. We're not going to do them all. Spurgeon, I love this. Prayer is the breath of faith. Prayer meetings are the lungs of the church.

Prayer is the breath of faith. Why do we pray? You know, why do we pray? Because our God is sovereign. He's all-powerful.

He's all-knowing. He knows better what we need than we do. It's interesting, you know, the people who say, well, if you believe God is sovereign, why do you pray?

Well, if you don't believe He's sovereign, why do you pray? We believe God is sovereign. He's in control. John Bunyan.

Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God and a scourge to Satan. Prayer will cease a man from sin, or sin will cease a man from prayer.

[26 : 28] Check your prayer line. How often do you pray? When was the last time you prayed personally? And I don't mean for that delicious steak you had for dinner.

But honestly, on your knees, begging and praying to God. Calling on Him as the sovereign Lord. If it's been a while, you need to do some self-examination.

Some sin in your life. Martin Luther, if I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business, I cannot go on without spending three hours daily in prayer.

This is Martin Luther, guys. Alright, I'm not saying you all need to be Martin Luther. But what I'm saying is he is saying it's a very important matter in his life.

It was a very important matter in our lives. And, I mean, he did some good things in his life. Got some things started.

[27 : 39] But we're still feeling the effects even today. But returning to the text in Acts 4, we see that Peter, John, and their companions, they're all engaging the Lord in prayer.

And their prayer is nothing like prayer that we experience today. I'll be honest with you. I've been to lots of prayer meetings. You've been to lots of prayer meetings. How they pray, it's not what I have experienced.

It's not what I've seen and observed. It's not what I personally have even, I guess, approached or approached prayer with. But it's prayer that's theologically deep and rich.

So, let's see. Their prayer, first of all, is a prayer that recognizes God's sovereignty. Verses 24 through 26. He says, Or they said, When they heard it, they lifted their voices together.

Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. Then who threw the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit. And he said what he said. When we pray, we approach the throne of the one who has created all things.

[28 : 51] He's all powerful. He's all wise. It is through his creative activity that he has revealed himself to all people. Romans chapter 1, verse 19 and 20. For what can be known about God is plain to them.

Because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived. Ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made.

So they are without excuse. God in his creative activity has revealed himself to all of creation. All man is without excuse.

In addition to the creative activity is God's determination of matters that will take place. That's what verse 25 and 26 talk about. His sovereignty is in full display of prophetic revelation.

I've went on about prophecy like through Christmas and really since then too. Talking about just the importance of prophecy. And how we can see it. And we see it, the prophecy prophesied.

[29 : 57] And we see it fulfilled. And it's just such a powerful thing. It's one of those proofs, if you will, of just the sovereignty and all-knowing nature of God. And again, the assurance to the believer that the Bible is true and accurate.

Isaiah 46, verse 8 through 10. If you're in my Wednesday Bible study, you've heard this already. Remember this and stand firm. Recall it to mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things of old.

God's saying there's nobody like me.

I will tell you now what's going to happen later. And I will make that happen. God is in control.

So, you know, there's prayer that recognizes God's sovereignty. There's prayer that recognizes God's plan. Verses 27 and 28. So you had the prophecy in verse 25 and 26 with David.

[31 : 18] It's that by the Holy Spirit. And then he quotes Psalm 2, verses 1 and 2. The apostles recognized that what happened at the crucifixion of Jesus was God fulfilling actively the prophecy he made in Psalm 2.

So why did the Gentiles rage in the people's plot in vain against the Lord and against his anointed? And the apostles recognized in verse 27 that in Jerusalem, Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles.

So you had the leaders, you had the rulers, you had the Gentiles, and you had the peoples of Israel. So it's all, right? So why did the Gentiles rage in the people's plot in vain?

Why is everybody against the Lord and his anointed? And they recognized and said, this is what happened in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified. God was fulfilling his prophecy.

He said it would happen, and it did. And as we saw earlier in Matthew 26, Jesus prayed his way through the trial of the cross. He said it would happen, and it would happen in the cross.

[33 : 00] His hardships are for the glory of God, ultimately. William Barclay, another one of those old preacher guys. Prayer is not flight.

Prayer is power. Prayer does not deliver a man from some terrible situation. Prayer enables a man to face and to master the situation. That's why I pointed out stanza two there.

Prayer is not. There is no promise that when you go to the Lord in prayer that he's going to take it away. He's going to take away the pain. He's going to take away the hardship. He's going to take away the suffering. But there is the promise that he will enable you to face and endure what you're going through.

Because there's a proper way to do it. And finally, this last sub-point, under point two.

Their prayer is a prayer that focuses on God's glory. The apostles do not go on and pray for deliverance from suffering nor from the judgment of their enemies. Rather, they pray for the continuing ability to proclaim the gospel in the face of opposition.

- [34 : 11] Their concern was not for their own comfort or deliverance from their discomfort, but for the gospel to be made known to all people through their lips, through their mouths.
- R.A. Torrey says the chief purpose of prayer is that God may be glorified in the answer. That God is glorified in the answer. Not about us.
- As it relates to the healing ministry of the apostles, we see once again in verse 30, that the focus is on God working the miracle, not the apostle. Not about Peter or John or Matthew or whoever you want to put out there.
- The apostles were to speak the message of salvation. We see in verse 30 that God was the one to stretch out his hand to heal.
- And he was the enabler of signs and wonders being done in the name of Jesus for his glory. He was the one working the supernatural stuff. And that's consistent with the fact that throughout the New Testament epistles, very little focus is given to miracles done by the apostles.
- [35 : 24] It's not about them. Miracles are there. But the focus is on the proclamation of the gospel message. It's on the proclamation of salvation in Jesus.
- That's the focus. It's not the miracle. It's the message. The final one another, verse 31 of chapter 4, is to preach with one another.
- So we see here as an answer, we see the answer to prayer. Prayer was answered pretty quickly. God doesn't always work that way. I think you know that by now. He doesn't always answer your prayer like right when you say amen or while you're in the middle of praying.
- Sometimes. But usually not. But he did here. When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.
- So the place they were meeting was shaken. That's a special manifestation assuring the apostles that God's power and presence were with them. You see this happened in the Old Testament.
- [36 : 32] When the presence of God is there, there's ground shaking experience. Not always, but sometimes. We see that they were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- It's not a second Pentecost when they went out speaking in tongues. Rather, this is an acknowledgement of the fact that God had given them the courage and the boldness that they had prayed for.
- And that was indicated by the fact that they continued to speak the word of God boldly. The threats of the leaders did not deter them in talking about Jesus.
- They were emboldened by the Holy Spirit. Prayer is a powerful means of experiencing the grace of God. When you're praying for one another, you're praying for the ministry, for the glory of God.
- David Peterson in his commentary on this said, Praying for God to bless the ministry of others can be a dangerous way of getting caught up in it yourself. I like that.
- [37 : 36] When we pray for the ministries of others, are we doing it out of obligation? Do we just grab our paper that we kind of mark that down on? Oh, Lord, please be with the Iwana program.
- That they go well, everyone be healthy, and kids won't go crazy. Oh, Lord, pray for the teen program. That the teens will all survive the night.
- And that the leaders won't go crazy. I mean, like, what is it that we're praying for? Are we caught up in, are we interested in the ministry that we're praying for?

Or is it just an obligation, a checkmark? So let me tell you, if it's an obligation or a checkmark, just put it aside, don't even bother. You know, we need to be passionately pouring out to the God who is sovereignly in control.

You know, one thing I absolutely love, it has been an immense blessing to me. I've prayed for the sawyers in Second Ani for years. We all have. And not that everyone can do this, but when I got to go and be part of the ministry, now when I pray, it's different.

[38 : 48] It's a different experience. It's a different purpose. It's a different thought process. Maybe what you're praying for, you need to kind of get caught up in it as well, so you can pray more intelligibly and with knowledge, not just lacking compassion or lacking passion, excuse me.

The apostles prayed and they worked together to share the gospel of Jesus with the lost and dying world. Their ministry started with and it continued through the prayer of the saints seeking the glory of God.

As we gather together this Sunday morning, I want to challenge you to not make the only time of gathering and praying in your week today. I don't want this to be the only time that you gather and you pray together.

I want you, this is my challenge to you, okay? And if I'm good and have a memory that I don't forget with, I'm going to follow up with you.

I want you to connect with one or two others here in the church to have a plan to call, text, or even get coffee during the week or have a meal, send an email.

[40 : 04] But to check up on somebody, to connect with them and share with them. See, God never intended for believers to live their lives in isolation and be secretive about their spiritual life.

So take the initiative, get together, share with one another, talk to each other. What's going on in life? Where are some hardships, some trials, some uncertainties you have going on? And guess what?

Humble yourself. Don't feel like you've got to guard yourself like, oh man, you know, what if, I don't know what you'd be thinking. What if I get hurt by sharing this? How are you going to get hurt by sharing it? It's a trial. It's a hardship in your life.

It's something you need support for. It's something you need the sovereign God of all creation to give you wisdom and guidance for. Share that with one another. And I'm going to go even further and say, take it outside your home.

Some of you are thinking, yeah, I'll just talk to my spouse about this. Well, guess what? That's not an option. Look across the room at each other. You all sit so far apart anyway. Look across the room and say, hey, I might send you a text or a call or talk to each other after service or shock somebody with a phone call this week.

[41 : 17] Not me. No, I'm just kidding. I can see it now. I'm going to have like 50 phone calls this week. But no, do it.

Text, call, email, but share with one another. That's what the church is about. It's not about just coming together and, hey, we listen to this guy, you know, blow hot air for 45 minutes.

And, you know, we say some prayers together. Usually he just prays and we sing some songs and that's it. No, man, it's about doing life together. Share with one another. Pray with one another.

That you kind of have to be on the phone with or in person. Like, be awkward. Like, read the text. Dear Jesus. I've never understood that. People post prayers on Facebook and, like, in text messages.

I'm just like, I just don't get the same feeling. Do it together and preach with one another. Now, that might be a stretch. I'm asking you to share the gospel with somebody.

[42 : 22] Go out in pairs. The person that you share with and pray with, go do it with, too. You don't have to. Pray for one another that you go share.

But I think of this verse and I'll close. 2 Timothy 1, verse 7. For God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.

We have the power, the enablement to go and share and love one another. Share with one another, pray with one another, and go and preach. We have a spirit of love.

God so loved the world. And we have that same God who loved the world living in us. Let us love the world as well. Go talk to a liberal.

So you go ahead and laugh. You need to come to adult Sunday school. We have a spirit of self-control.

[43 : 22] What about your own life? The sin that's in your life. The sin, the temptation that you struggle with. Don't endure it alone. Call somebody. Ask somebody to pray for you.

Oh, my word. In New England. Could you imagine if there was like 50 people asking other people to pray for them? Like, hey, I'm struggling. I'm having a hard time. God, I'm having a hard time.

The honesty that might actually be there. That'd be amazing. It's the spirit God gave us. So let's do it together. Let's one another through our trials and hardships.

Let's pray. Father God, I thank you, Lord, for the example for Peter and John. I thank you for the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I thank you for the example of many in church history that show us and exemplify the importance of prayer in our lives.

[44 : 21] The importance of one anothering together. That we would share with one another. That we would pray for one another. That we would go and preach with one another. So that the gospel message would be heard.

And people can come to know Jesus. Lord, I am convicted by this. Help me this week, Lord.

To reach out to one or two people. To share with them struggles, hardships, and difficulties.

Lord, to pray with them. To be prayed for by them. And Lord, help me to unashamedly declare the gospel message.

To be as Paul says in Romans 1.16. For I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Because it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe. Help me to preach it, Lord, that they may hear it.

[45 : 24] In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.